

Organizing with Erin

BY JACQUELINE FITZGERALD

Some people have a natural talent for organization, which is good news for those who lack the ability. Erin Pillman, the owner of Organizing with Erin, has belonged to the former group since she was a kid. Even as a child, she loved to take everything out of her mom's pantry and reorganize it.

That passion continues to this day as she helps people bring order to their homes and businesses — creating tidy, spacious, and calming environments. Not limited to closets and cupboards, she offers digital organizing as well.

Organizing is a skill everyone needs their entire lives, so it's not surprising that Erin's clients range from kids to seniors. She often works with couples who have different levels of tolerance for clutter. "It's sort of like a mediation," she says. "They have to find a happy medium because you can't force the messier person to be perfectly tidy, but you also can't expect the tidy person to live in chaos."

No matter the client's age or life situation, they frequently have nostalgic attachments to their possessions or they're afraid to let them go. Erin and her team embody empathy, compassion, and kindness as they assist people with tough decisions. Taking photos of things or agreeing to let go of some, but not all, items can be effective.

For instance, they might encourage a client who has many old greeting cards from loved ones to choose a pretty box and whatever fits in the box is how much they keep. "But if someone wants to keep all of it, that's okay too," says Erin. "I'm definitely not trying to convince anybody to do anything they don't want to do."

Many folks feel nervous or ashamed. Erin and her team bring a zero-judgment, anti-shame approach to every job. She has worked with people who are embarrassed to say they haven't had guests at their homes in decades. "It's totally fixable and when we get everything tidied up, they're overjoyed," she says. "They can't wait to have friends over. We give them their homes back."

The process can be transformative as people experience a sense of relief and healing. She explains: "We address a lot of psychological aspects. Your space affects your physical and mental health. Having a comfortable relationship with your stuff is such a huge piece for nervous-system regulation and confidence. It's so deep. Even your therapist doesn't go in your drawers!"

That's why she's careful to maintain confidentiality and hire only the most trustworthy, high-integrity, wonderful people, she says.

Of course, donating can ease the discomfort of parting with belongings. Clients can donate clothes to Erin's non-profit, Community Threads, which aims to reduce waste and make quality clothing accessible to all. Passionate about sustainability, she supports local recycling efforts, such as the Buy Nothing Project.

Erin's team works closely with each person. "We custom-tailor everything to the client's exact lifestyle — aesthetically and functionally — establishing workable systems so order can be maintained going forward," Erin says. "We address procrastination and provide momentum, giving clients the catalyst to get off and running."

What does she consider a job well done? When the space is neat and tidy, the team is no longer necessary, and the client feels empowered to maintain their space on their own.

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